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Maine Women's Lobby News Letter (1995 - December) No 13

Maine Women's Lobby Staff

Maine Women's Lobby

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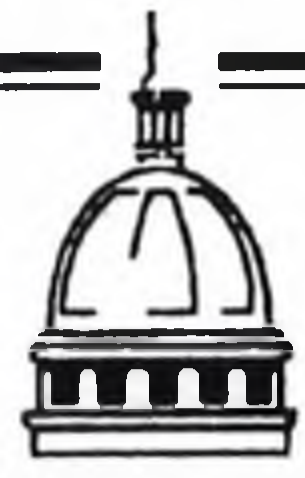
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Maine Women's Lobby

December 1995

Number 13

UPCOMING LEGISLATION

The following is a brief summary of a few of the key pieces of legislation we will be working on in the Second Session. Unless noted otherwise, we are in support of these bills.

LR 2574 An Act To Prohibit Managed Care Plans From Requiring Inappropriate Early Discharge of Maternity Patients and Newborns—Sen. Jill Goldthwait

Exact language not yet available. However, the intent is to insure that women and newborns receive appropriate health care. This bill is in response to an increasing trend by insurance providers to only cover a 24-hour postpartum stay. Guidelines from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American Academy of Pediatrics provide that, "when no complications are present, the postpartum hospital stay ranges from 48 hours for vaginal delivery to 96 hours for caesarean birth, excluding the day of delivery."

LR 2782 An Act To Amend The Insurance Code With Respect To Domestic Abuse—Rep. Bonnie Green

Exact language not yet available. The intent of this bill is to prevent insurance companies from excluding coverage for losses, or denying a claim based on the claimant's abuse history.

If you, or someone you know has had this experience, please call either the Lobby office (622-0851) or Tracy Cooley, statewide coordinator for the Maine Coalition for Family Crisis Services (941-1194).

LR 2745 An Act to Prohibit Stalking—Rep. Michael Saxl

Exact language not yet available. The intent of this bill is to strengthen the current (and inadequate!) protections from stalking. The bill will address the following issues: revised bail guidelines, agreements with other states to notify each other of existing protection from abuse orders, mandatory minimum sentence for violation of a protection from abuse order and making the act of stalking a crime.

LD 1448 An Act to Reconcile Rights and Responsibilities with Respect to Sexual Orientation and Related Matters—Sen. Georgette Berube

Although the title of this bill might lead one to believe that it has merit, the content is very troubling. One particularly offensive implication contained in the bill is that gay men and lesbians are child molesters. This bill may be withdrawn. If it is not, we will strongly oppose it.

LD 1512 An Act to Ensure Fairness and Choice to Patients and Providers Under Managed Health Care—Sen. Dale McCormick

The purpose of this bill is to provide fundamental protection to patients and providers in managed health care plans. Some key provisions are: patients understand the coverage and incentives in such plans, providers receive due process relative to plan selection and denial of participation, patients are given as many options as possible, consistent with cost-containment strategies.

For more in-depth information about upcoming legislation watch for your Legislative Alerts or join our Legislative Committee.

BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS

The Maine Women's Lobby heard speakers address women's issues from a global and local perspective at their annual breakfast in Portland in October. Joanne Polumbo-McCallie, Head Coach of the University of Maine Black Bear women, and Lois Reckett, Director of the Family Crisis Shelter, spoke on the 1995 theme, *Women's Issues from Bangor to Beijing*.

Polumbo-McCallie took the UMaine Black Bear women to their first NCAA tournament, and was named North Atlantic Conference Coach of the Year. Having been offered a position at another college, Polumbo-McCallie used public negotiations to focus attention on drastic funding inequities between sports programs for men and women at the University of Maine, a publicly funded institution.

Reckett is a familiar face in women's advocacy in Maine. A member of the National Board of Directors for the National Organization for Women, Reckett discussed her recent participation in the United Nations' International Conference on Women, and the call for eliminating the Vatican as a nation-state at the United Nations.

MAINE WOMEN'S LOBBY GIFT MEMBERSHIPS

The Women's Lobby would like to encourage you to give a gift membership to the lobby to a friend or family member who shares your commitment to issues affecting women and girls. The new member will receive a bumpersticker, newsletters, legislative alerts, as well as invitations to annual events like the Legislative Reception and the Breakfast of Champions. We have brand new gift membership announcement cards and envelopes available. If you are interested, contact the Women's Lobby office at 622-0851.

Keeping You Informed from the Chair

As we wind down the first half of our fiscal year, it seems appropriate to not only reflect upon the Lobby's successes but also to focus on the priorities for the next six months.

I wish that each of you could have been at our December Board meeting! Had you been there, you would have experienced, as I did, incredible positive energy, creativity and commitment to improving the lives of Maine women and girls. The thirteen Board members present drove from Orono and Portland, Thorndike, and Dresden, Rome and Auburn to enthusiastically do the work needed to lead the Maine Women's Lobby. The organization is indeed fortunate to have such a talented group of women as its Board of Directors. This group has made my job easy and fun.

We will retreat in early February to do our annual "visioning" and long range planning. We plan to spend a Saturday in the country thinking and dialoguing about where the Lobby has been, where it is today and where it needs to be over the next two to three years. This, then, will guide our goals and budget for the 1996-1997 fiscal year. Please write, call, E-mail or fax us with your ideas and input for this planning session. Better yet, consider joining us for the day to influence our direction and priorities.

We hosted our Breakfast of Champions in the Fall with an emphasis on gender equity in women's sports via Coach Joanne Palumbo from the University of Maine at Orono's Women's Basketball Team and a report on the Beijing International Women's Conference from Lois Reckett who 'was there'. We've added over 30 new members and have had a better than 75% renewal rate from existing members. We have raised almost 20% of our \$22,000 budget goal for the Women's issues Leadership Council (WILC). We are delighted to report receipt of a generous grant from the Rockefeller Foundation. We worked to assist Maine Won't Discriminate in defeating Question 1. We've secured the skills and expertise of two interns to help in the office several days a week.

As we move into the new year, we will, as always, be present and visible in the Maine House and Senate. We will actively shepherd legislation for focusing on the discharge of maternity patients, insurance code amendments for victims of abuse and violence and stalking. We are tracking the outcome of other proposed legislation such as a bill aimed at increased choice in managed health care plans and a spate of other health-related bills. Watch for our Legislative Alert in January for more specific information.

Do plan to attend our Legislative Reception in March in the Augusta area. Consistent with our annual ritual, you'll receive raffle tickets early in the year and we hope you'll continue to support us in making this a highly lucrative event. Our sister organization, the Women's Development Institute, has assumed statewide responsibility for the coordination of activities and publicity associated with April's "Take Our Daughter's To Work Day". We hope to increase participation in the day by women and girls who wouldn't, in the normal course of their lives, participate. Funding is aggressively being pursued at this time and we hope to report more specific news in the near future.

Most importantly, let me take this opportunity to thank each and everyone of you for your continued support and enthusiasm for our work. Without you, our achievement's would not be possible. On behalf of the Maine Women's Lobby and the Women's Development Institute, I extend warmest wishes for a new year filled with happiness, fulfillment and prosperity!

—Pierrette Kelly



. . . from the Executive Director

Well, Election Day is finally behind us and I'm sure that many of you are still recovering from the countless hours you spent working to defeat Question 1. It was a significant victory—good job! Unfortunately, more work lies ahead. We still need to pass legislation that will prohibit discrimination in the areas of employment, housing, public accommodation and credit based upon sexual orientation. Although Senator Dale McCormick has withdrawn her bill intended to ensure such protection the issue continues to command our attention. Our work this next year will be to educate our friends and neighbors and develop the atmosphere needed for passage in the 118th Legislative Session.



In October, I was pleased to be invited to a conference in Michigan that was sponsored by Region 9A of the United Auto Workers. It was a five day event that brought together union members, community activists and progressive elected officials from across New England. For me, it was an increasingly rewarding five days. Hearing union members clearly articulating the connections between the low wage job market and AFDC receipt was a surprise. And I was delighted when I heard them referring to women who needed public assistance as "unemployed workers" not as "welfare queens."

By the end of our stay all of us had a much greater appreciation of the interconnectedness of all of our issues. We had come to the conference separate, focused on our own issues—labor, women, the environment, civil rights—and we left recognizing that the struggle of one needed to be the struggle of us all.

I believe this lesson will be invaluable as we enter the second regular session in January. Please call the office (622-0851) if you would like to become more active at the Lobby this session.

—Laura Fortman

Got a pen and paper?

Or your electronic address book? Thanks to our administrative assistant's brother Alex Brown, the Maine Women's Lobby is on-line. And we'd love to hear from you! We're new at this surfing business, so if you have any tips and pointers – or know of any nifty women's issues chat groups or on-line services – please drop us an electronic line. Our address is

liscEB@aol.com.

The Membership Committee is recruiting members from the lobby who are interested in taking part in the work of that committee. Call the office for more information.

TAKE OUR DAUGHTERS TO WORK DAY

In September, the Women's Development Institute (WDI) accepted the role of statewide sponsor of Take Our Daughters to Work Day. Hurricane Island Outward Bound, former sponsor of the event in Maine, approached us hoping that WDI might bring greater statewide visibility, public support, and participation to the nationally recognized event. WDI has been looking for an opportunity to work with girls and young women around self esteem and personal aspirations, so taking on the event is a perfect match.

WDI convened the first meeting of a steering committee in early December. The committee will plan a media strategy, will seek the support of key education, business and political leaders in the state, and will be responsible for distributing materials to local organizing efforts. The committee has also identified groups of girls to target for participation, such as: girls from low income families, "at-risk" youth, Native American and Franco American girls, lesbians and home schooled girls.

The next meeting of the steering committee is January 8th at the Lobby office in Augusta. We invite you to call the office, 622-0851, for more information about organizing in your community, or if you are interested in joining the steering committee.

WDI RECEIVES ROCKEFELLER GRANT

The Women's Development Institute is pleased to announce the receipt of a \$15,000 grant from the Rockefeller Family Fund. The grant will support the ongoing work of WDI, and results from the success of the Women's Economic Security Project. (WESP) WESP has earned enormous public recognition across the state and the nation.

Don't Miss Our Annual Legislative Reception.

March 5, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. at The Senator Inn, Augusta.
For tickets and other information call the office at
622-0851.

A SUCCESSFUL TENTH ANNUAL MAINE WOMEN'S STUDIES CONFERENCE

On December 1 and 2, the Women's Studies Program at the University of Southern Maine organized and held the 10th Annual Maine Women's Studies Conference. This event provides the opportunity for women to come together from around the state and discuss a specific topic as it relates to women. The title of this year's event was "Women, Education: The Difference it Makes". This interdisciplinary conference took place on the Gorham Campus and included papers, panels and workshops focused on feminist research, educational application and political activism.

The conference got off to an exciting start on Friday evening with keynote speaker Blythe Clinchy, Professor of Psychology at Wellesley College and co-author of Women's Ways of Knowing. Saturday was filled with workshops which included topics such as introducing girls to science and math, educating working-class girls in rural Maine, teaching women's history, literacy education, experiences of lesbian teachers, the influence of role models, welfare reform and education, and multicultural teaching in economics.

The Maine Women's Lobby staffed a table on Saturday, and shared valuable information with conference participants about the work of the lobby. Thank you to Jenna Menhert, Wendy Betts and Jan Conley, Maine Women's Lobby Board Members, for working at this event. Be sure to watch for next year's conference!

THE MWL BOARD WELCOMES ITS NEW MEMBERS

Carol Kelly is the new Treasurer for MWL. Carol is the owner of Deep Woods, a wood flooring contractor and retailer located in Falmouth, Maine. Through her business Carol has been an active supporter of women in the trades, providing opportunities for women to learn the wood flooring trade as well as small business management skills. She looks forward to participating on the board to further advance other opportunities for women.

Jan Conley, new MWL C.O.R.E. board member, is a Research Assistant with the Edmund S. Muskie Institute of Public Affairs Center for Child and Family Policy, and the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organization Improvement. Jan's interests focus on domestic violence in Maine, law enforcement training in sensitive child abuse investigation, cultural diversity and other issues relative to women, children and families. She is a member of the Affirmative Action Advisory Committee for the University of Southern Maine and the Domestic Violence Task Force.

Jenna Mehnert recently returned to Maine after completing her M.S.W. at the University of Pennsylvania. She chose to become involved in the Lobby due to her strong feminist commitment to social change. Jenna will focus her attention on the membership committee as well as working with W.D.I. on the Take Our Daughter's to Work Day. Ms. Mehnert is a Protective Caseworker with the Lewiston D.H.S. office. Originally from Orono, Jenna now lives in Augusta.

Katherine Pelletreau brings to the Lobby a rich background in fundraising and development. In addition she has worked for choice campaign reform and community projects to combat poverty. Katherine currently works as a fundraising and communications associate at the Maine Development Foundation in Augusta.

MWL BOARD**Executive Committee****Chair:** Pierrette Lambert Kelly, Rome**Co-Chair:** Janice Bork, Thorndike**Treasurer:** Carol Kelly, Falmouth**Secretary:** Lucinda Coombs, Leeds**Legislative Committee**

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Women's Issues Leadership Council (WILC)

Karen Hobson, Lewiston

Public Relations

Martha Sterling-Golden, Brunswick



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MEMBERSHIP FORM*I want to help improve the lives of Maine Women and their families.***Maine Women's Lobby**

\$125 Supporter
\$ 60 Household
\$ 35 Individual
\$ 10 Student
\$ Name of School: _____
\$ Other* _____

Women's Issues Leadership Council

\$1000 Champion
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☐ I prefer to pay with my:

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SIGNATURE OF CARDHOLDER

Expiration Date _____

☐ I would like to pay in installments. _____

My contribution is \$ _____

Name _____ Home Phone _____ Business Phone _____

Address _____ Town _____ County _____ Zip _____

Senate District _____ House District _____

☐ I do not want my name given to other groups.

* The Maine Women's Lobby is committed to representing women of all economic means. Any contribution you are able to make will entitle you to membership.



P.O. Box 15, Hallowell, Maine 04347

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UPCOMING EVENTS

- MWL Annual Legislative Reception – March 5, Senator Inn, Augusta
5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
- Spring Great Escapes Raffle
- Maine Black Bears Women's Basketball, Home Games:
January 12, 7:30 p.m. Hofstra
January 14, Noon Drexel
January 20, 1 pm UNH
January 30, 7:30 p.m.. Hartford

Dec 1, 199

Ann Schonberger
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Bangor, ME 04401